Background and Aim

- Prior research explores that cross-cultural experiences are extremely complex, overwhelming and stressful for different cultured-individuals and they might feel disoriented and anxious (Furnham & Bochner, 1986; Zane & Mak, 2003)
- Cross-cultural consumption research is underdeveloped area (Gupta, 2016)
- This study explores Asian wedding-rituals' experience as a set of spectacular consumption for Western tourists and identifies paradoxes between the host and the guest

We explore the following key question:

How Asian weddings become a Western spectacle?

Key arguments

(1) Asian countries (highly culture- and religion-bound / practicing rituals) might offer spectacular consumption to Western tourists
(2) Though unfamiliar language, however, symbolic visualization provides deep immersion

Reasons why Western tourists participate

- Desire to meet ‘newness’
- Experience ‘uniqueness’ of other’s culture
- To escape from everyday life and disenchantment

Motivation for Asians having 'Strangers'

- Meeting financial needs of extremely high-cost weddings
- A way to share Asian culture, traditions and rituals with Western world
- To socialize with Western world and making new friends across borders

Theoretical framework

Spectacular consumption

“everyday demonstration of capitalist-driven phenomena through advertisements, TV, films, celebrities that leads to mass consumption as a way of life”

(Debord (2014 [1967])

Mass consumption replaces use value with sign value (semiotics), fabricated appearance

Cathedrals (and landscapes) of consumption

offers “magical, fantastic, and enchanted settings for consumption such as shopping malls, museums, mega-churches, educational institutions offer”

(Ritzer, 2010)

Marketplace transformation: from goods & services to spectacles, fantasy worlds

Performance and tourist gaze

Deighton (1992) concept of performance consumption in weddings, funerals and all staged events

Tourist Gaze: “seeing the world from a particular lens of ideas, skills, desire and expectations”

(Urry and Larsen, 2011)

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